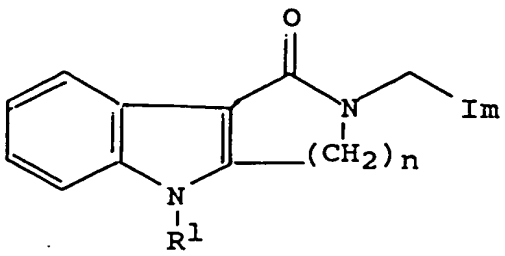
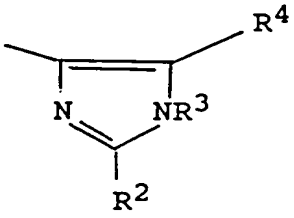
WE CLAIM:

1. A compound of formula (I)

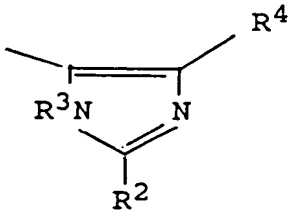


(I)

wherein Im represents an imidazolyl group of the formula:



or



and R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a group selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}alkenyl, C_{3-10}alkynyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkylC_{1-4}alkyl, phenyl, phenylC_{1-3}alkyl, phenylmethoxymethyl, phenoxyethyl or phenoxymethyl; ~~$-CO_2R^5$, $-COR^5$, $-CONR^5R^6$ or $-SO_2R^5$ (wherein R^5 and R^6, which may be the same or different, each represents a hydrogen atom, a C_{1-6}alkyl or C_{3-7}cycloalkyl group or a phenyl or phenylC_{1-4}alkyl group, in which the phenyl group is optionally substituted by one or more C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy or hydroxy groups or halogen atoms, with the proviso that R^5 does not represent a hydrogen atom when R^1 represents a group $-CO_2R^5$ or $-SO_2R^5$);~~

one of the groups represented by R^2, R^3 and R^4 is a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-7}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}alkenyl, phenyl or phenylC_{1-3}alkyl group, and each of the other two

groups, which may be the same or different, represents a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-6}alkyl group;

n represents 2 or 3;

or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof.

2. A compound according to claim 1 in which R^1 represents a C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-4}alkynyl, C_{5-6}cycloalkyl, C_{5-6}cycloalkylmethyl, phenylC_{1-2}alkyl, or phenylmethoxymethyl ~~or N,N-diC_{1-3}alkylcarboxamido group~~.

3. A compound according to claim 1 in which R^2, R^3 and R^4 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-3}alkyl group.

4. A compound according to claim 1 in which R^1 represents a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-4}alkenyl, C_{3-4}alkynyl, C_{5-6}cycloalkyl, C_{5-6}cycloalkylmethyl, phenylC_{1-2}alkyl, or phenylmethoxymethyl, ~~N,N-diC_{1-3}alkylcarboxamido or C_{1-3}alkylsulphonyl group;~~ R^2 represents a hydrogen atom; and R^3 and R^4 each represent a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-3}alkyl group.

5. A compound according to claim 1 in which R^1 represents a methyl, n-propyl, prop-2-ynyl, cyclopentyl, cyclopentylmethyl, or benzyl ~~or N,N-dimethylcarboxamido group;~~ R^2 and R^3 each represent a hydrogen atom; and R^4 represents a methyl group.

6. A compound according to claim 4 in which n represents 2.

7. A compound according to claim 5 in which n represents 2.

8. 2,3,4,5-Tetrahydro-5-methyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;

and physiologically acceptable ~~salts and solvates~~ thereof.

9. A compound selected from:
2,3,4,5-Tetrahydro-5-(phenylmethyl)-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
5-cyclopentyl-2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-5-propyl-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
5-(cyclopentylmethyl)-2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
3,4,5,6-tetrahydro-6-methyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-azepino[4,3-b]indol-1(2H)-one;
2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-N,N-dimethyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1-oxo-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-5-carboxamide;
2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl-5-(2-propynyl)-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one;
and physiologically acceptable salts and solvates thereof.

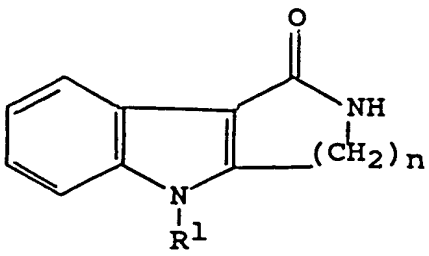
10. A compound according to claim 1 in the form of a hydrochloride, hydrobromide, sulphate, alkylsulphonate, arylsulphonate, phosphate, acetate, citrate, succinate, tartrate, fumarate or maleate salt.

11. The compound of claim 8 in the form of a hydrochloride salt.

12. The compound of claim 8 in the form of a maleate salt.

13. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof, which process comprises:

(A) alkylating a compound of formula (II)



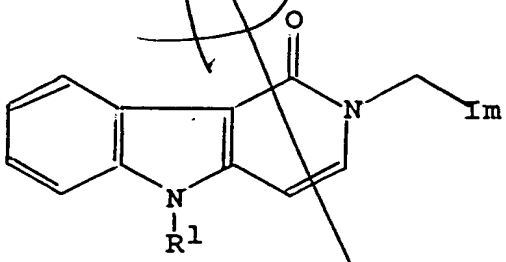
(II)

with a compound of formula (III)

$$LCH_2\text{-}Im \qquad \text{(III)}$$

or a protected derivative thereof, wherein L represents a leaving atom or group, followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

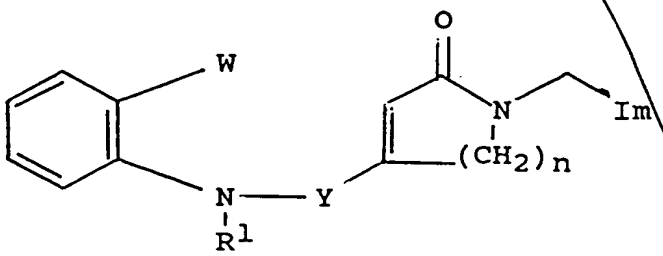
(B) for the preparation of a compound of formula (I) in which n is 2, hydrogenating a compound of formula (IV)



(IV)

or a protected derivative thereof, followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

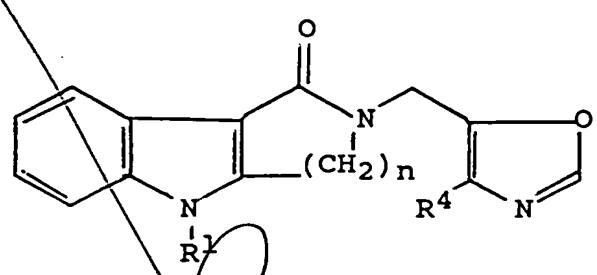
(C) cyclising a compound of formula (V)



(V)

wherein W represents a hydrogen atom and Y represents the group NH, or W represents a halogen atom and Y represents a bond, or a salt or protected derivative thereof, followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

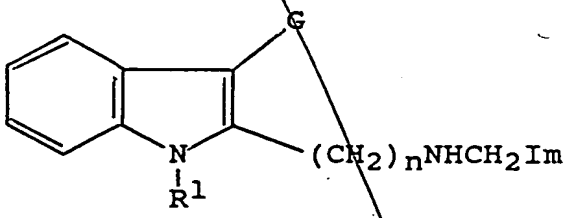
(D) for the preparation of a compound of formula (I) in which R^3 represents a hydrogen atom, reacting a compound of formula (VI)



(VI)

or a protected derivative thereof, with formamide, followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

(E) reacting a compound of formula (VII)



(VII)

where G represents a hydrogen atom, or a protected derivative thereof, with phosgene in the presence of a Lewis acid; or

where G represents a bromine or iodine atom, or a protected derivative thereof, with carbon monoxide in the presence of a palladium (II) salt; followed if necessary by removal of any protecting groups present; or

(F) converting a compound of general formula (I) into another compound of formula (I) using conventional

techniques; or

(G) removing protecting group(s) from a protected form of a compound of formula (I);

and when the compound of formula (I) is obtained as a mixture of enantiomers, optionally resolving the mixture to obtain the desired enantiomer;

and/or where the compound of formula (I) is in the form of a free base, optionally converting the free base into a salt.

14. A pharmaceutical composition for treating a condition caused by a disturbance of "neuronal" 5-HT function which comprises an effective amount to relieve said condition of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof together with at least one physiologically acceptable carrier or excipient.

15. A pharmaceutical composition for treating nausea and vomiting and/or for promoting gastric emptying which comprises an effective amount to relieve said nausea and vomiting or to promote said gastric emptying of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof together with at least one physiologically acceptable carrier or excipient.

16. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 in a form adapted for oral or parenteral administration.

17. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 14 wherein the active ingredient is 2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-5-methyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof.

18. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 15

in a form adapted for oral or parenteral administration.

19. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 15 wherein the active ingredient is 2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-5-methyl-2-[(5-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)methyl]-1H-pyrido[4,3-b]indol-1-one or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof.

20. A method of treating a condition caused by disturbance of "neuronal" 5-HT function which comprises administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof to relieve said condition.

21. A method of treating nausea and vomiting and/or promoting gastric emptying which comprises administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I) as defined in claim 1 or a physiologically acceptable salt or solvate thereof to relieve said nausea and vomiting and/or promote said gastric emptying.

Add B'

Add C'